1st

AN EPISTLE TO A FRIEND CONCERNING POETRY.

By SAMUEL WESLEY.

Fungor vice Cotis.

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PREFACE.

I Have not much to ſay of this Poem, before I leave it to the Mercy of the Reader. There's no need of looking far into it, to find out that the direct Deſign of a great part of it, is to ſerve the Cauſe of Religion and Virtue; tho' 'twas neceſſary for that End to diſpoſe the whole in ſuch a manner as might be agreeable to the Taſt of the preſent Age, and of thoſe who uſually give ſuch ſort of Books the Reading. If there be any Thoughts in it relating to Poetry, that either are not known to all Perſons, or are tolerably ranged and expreſſed, the Reader is welcom to 'em for Over-weight: If there are too few of theſe, I yet hope the Pardon of all candid Judges, becauſe I've done the beſt I cou'd on this Argument. I can't be angry with any Perſon for ranking me amongſt the Ogylbys; my Quarrel is with thoſe that rank themſelves amongſt Atheiſts, and impudently defend and propagate that ridiculous Opinion of the Eternity of the World, and a fatal invincible Chain of Things, which, it ſeems, is now moſt commonly made uſe of to deſtroy the Faith, as our lewd Plays are to corrupt the Morals of the Nation: An Opinion, big with more Abſurdities than Tranſubſtantiation it ſelf, and of far more fatal Conſequence, if receiv'd and believ'd: For beſides its extremely weakening, if not deſtroying, the Belief of the Being and Providence of God, it utterly takes away any ſort of Freedom in Humane Actions, reduces Mankind beneath the Brute-Creation; perfectly excuſes the greateſt Villanies in this World, and entirely vacates all Retribution hereafter. One wou'd wonder with what Face or Conſcience ſuch a Sett of Men ſhou'd hope to be treated by the Rules of Civility, when they themſelves break through thoſe of Society, and common Humanity: How they can expect any fairer Quarter than Wolves or Tygers; or what Reaſon they can give why a Price ſhould not be ſett upon their Heads, as well as on the Others; or at leaſt why they ſhould not be ſecurely hamper'd and muzzled, and led about for a Sight, like other Monſters. 'Tis the fatal and ſpreading Poyſon of theſe Mens Examples and Principles which has extorted theſe warm Expreſſions from me; I cannot with Patience ſee my Countrey ruin'd by the prodigious increaſe of Infidelity and Immorality, nor forbear crying out with ſome Vehemence, when I am giving Warning to all honeſt Men to ſtand up in the Defence of it, when it is in greater and more eminent danger than it wou'd have been formerly, if the Spaniſh Armada had made a Deſcent amongſt us: I don't ſpeak of theſe things by diſtant Hear-ſay, or only from our publick Prints, but from my own Knowledg and little Acquaintance in the World, and therefore others muſt have obſerv'd much more, and cannot but fear, that if things go on as they now are, without a greater Check, and more ſevere Laws againſt theſe wide and contagious Miſchiefs, at leaſt without a more general united Endeavour to put thoſe Laws already made in ſtrict Execution, we are in a fair way to become a Nation of Atheiſts. 'Tis now no difficult matter to meet with thoſe who pretend to be lewd upon Principles; They'll talk very gravely, look as if they were in earneſt, and come ſobrii ad perdendam Rempublicam: they wou'd be

Criticks

PREFACE.

Criticks *too, and* Philoſophers: *They attack* Religion *in* Form *and batter it from every* Quarter; *they wou'd turn the very* Scriptures *againſt themſelves, and labour hard to remove a* Supreme Being *out of the World; or if they do vouchſafe him any* room *in it, 'tis only that they may find* Fault *with his* Works, *which they think, with that* Blaſphemer *of old, might have been much better order'd, had they themſelves ſtood by and directed the* Architect. *They'll tell you the* Errors *of* Nature *are every where* plain *and* viſible, *all* monſtrous, *here* too much *and there* too little; *or, as* one of their own Poets,

Here ſhe's *too ſparing*, there *profuſely* vain.

What would theſe Men have, or why can't they be content to ſink ſingle *into the* bottomleſs Gulph, *without dragging ſo much Company thither with 'em? Can they grapple* Omnipotence, *or are they ſure they can be* too hard *for* Heaven? *Can they* Thunder *with a* Voice like God, *and caſt abroad the* Rage *of their* Wrath? *Cou'd they* annihilate *Hell, indeed, or did it only conſiſt of ſuch* painted Flames *as they'd fain believe it, they might make a ſhift to be tolerably happy, more quietly rake through the World, and* ſink *into* Nothing. *There's too great reaſon to apprehend, that this* Infection *is ſpred among Perſons of almoſt all* Ranks *and* Qualities; *and that tho' ſome may think it* decent *to keep on the* Maſque, *yet if they were ſearch'd to the* bottom, *all* their Religion *wou'd be found that which they moſt blaſphemouſly aſſert of* Religion *in* general, *only a* State Engin *to keep the* World in Order. *This is* Hypocriſie *with a Witneſs, the* baſeſt *and* meaneſt *of* Vices; *and how come Men to fall into theſe* damnable Errors *in Faith, but by* Lewdneſs *of Life? The Cowards wou'd not believe a God becauſe they* dare *not do it, for Woe be to 'em if there be one, and conſequently any* Future Puniſhments. *From ſuch as theſe, I deſire no Favour, but that of their* Ill Word, *as their* Crimes *muſt expect* none *from me, whoſe* Character *obliges me to declare an* eternal War *againſt* Vice *and* Infidelity, *tho' at the ſame time heartily to* pity *thoſe who are* infected *with it. If I cou'd be* ambitious *of a* Name *in the World, it ſhou'd be that I might* ſacrifice *it in ſo glorious a* Cauſe *as that of* Religion *and* Virtue: *If none but* Generals *muſt fight in this* ſacred War, *when there are ſuch* infernal Hoſts *on the other ſide, they cou'd never prevail without one of the* antient Miracles: *If* little People *can but well diſcharge the Place of a* private Centinel, *'tis all that's expected from us. I hope I ſhall never let the* Enemies of God and my Countrey *come on without* Fireing, *tho' it ſerve but to give the* Alarm, *and if I dye without* quitting *my* Poſt, *I deſire no greater Glory. I have endeavour'd to ſhew that I had no* Perſonal Pique *againſt any whoſe* Characters *I may have given in this Poem, nor think the worſe of them for their* Thoughts *of me. I hope I have every where done 'em* Juſtice, *and as well as I cou'd, have given 'em* Commendation *where they deſerve it; which may alſo, on the other ſide, acquit me of* Flattery *with all* Impartial Judges; *for 'tis not only the* Great *whoſe* Characters *I have here attempted. And if what I have written may be any ways* uſeful, *or* innocently diverting *to the virtuous and ingenious* Readers, *he has his End, who is*

Their Humble Servant

S. WESLEY.

AN EPISTLE TO A FRIEND CONCERNING POETRY.

AS Brother *Prynne* of old from Mount *Orgueil*,
So I to you from *Epworth* and the *Iſle*:
Harſh *Northern* Fruits from our cold Heav'ns I ſend,
Yet, ſince the *beſt* they yield, they'll pleaſe a *Friend*.

You ask me, What's the readieſt way to *Fame*,
And how to gain a *Poet*'s ſacred Name?
For *Saffold* ſend, your Choice were full as juſt,
When burning *Fevers* fry your Limbs to Duſt!
Yet, leſt you *angry* grow at your *Defeat*,
And me as ill as that fierce *Spark* ſhould treat
Who did the Farrier into Doctor *beat*;
You to my little *Quantum*, Sir, are free,
Which I from HORACE glean or NORMANBY;
Theſe with ſome grains of *Common Senſe* unite,
" Then freely *think*, and as I think I write.

First *poize* your *Genius*, nor presume to write
If *Phœbus* smile not, or some *Muse* invite:
Nature refuses *Force*, you strive in vain,
She will not *drag*, but struggling breaks the Chain.
How bright a Spark of *Heav'nly Fire* must warm!
What *Blessings* meet a *Poet's Mind* to form!
How oft must he for those *Life-Touches* sit,
Genius, *Invention*, *Memory*, *Judgment*, *Wit*?
There's here no *Middle-State*, you must excel;
Wit has no *Half-way-House* 'twixt *Heav'n* and *Hell*.
All cannot All things; lest you mourn too late,
Remember *Phaeton's* unhappy *Fate*!
Eager to guide the *Coursers* of the *Day*,
Beneath their *Brazen Hoofs* he trampled lay,
And his bright *Ruines* mark'd their flaming Way.

Genius. You'll ask, What Genius is, and Where to find?
'Tis the full *Power* and *Energy* of *Mind*:
A *Reach* of *Thought* that skims all Nature o'er,
Exhausts this narrow *World*, and asks for *more*:
Through every *Rank of Beings* when 't has flown,
Can frame a *New Creation* of its own:
By *Possible* and *Future* unconfin'd:
Can stubborn *Contradictions* yoke, and bind
Through *Fancy's* Realms, with Number, Time and Place,
Chimera-Forms, a thin, an airy Race;
Then with a secret *conscious Pride* surveys
Th' *Enchanted Castles* which 't had *Power* to raise.

Wit. As *Genius* is the *Strength*, be Wit defin'd
The *Beauty* and the *Harmony* of *Mind*:
Beauty's Proportion, Air, each lively Grace
The *Soul* diffuses round the *Heav'nly Face*:
'Tis *various*, yet 'tis *equal*, still the same
In *Alpine Snows*, or *Ethiopian Flame*;
While *glaring Colours* short-liv'd Grace supply,
Nor *Frost* nor *Sun* they bear, but *scorch* and *die*.

Judgment. Nor these alone, tho much they can, suffice,
Judgment must join, or never hope the Prize:
Those *Headstrong Coursers* soon wr along the Plains,
The *Rider's* down, if once he lose the *Reins*:
Soon the *Mad Mixture* will to all give Law,
And for the *Laurel Wreaths* present thee *Wreaths of Straw*.

Judgment's

Judgment's the *Act of Reaſon*; that which brings
Fit *Thoughts* to *Thoughts*, and argues *Things* from *Things*,
True, Decent, Juſt, are in its *Balance* try'd,
And thence we learn to *Range*, *Compound*, *Divide*.

Invention and Memory

A *Cave* there is wherein thoſe *Nymphs* reſide
Who all the Realms of *Senſe* and *Fancy* guide;
Nay ſome affirm that in the deepeſt *Cell*
Imperial *Reaſon's* ſelf does not diſdain to dwell:
With Living *Reed* 'tis thatch'd and guarded round,
Which mov'd by *Winds* emit a Silver Sound:
Two *Cryſtal Fountains* near its *Entrance* play,
Wide ſcatt'ring *Golden Streams* which ne'er decay,
Two *Labyrinths* behind harmonious Sounds convey:
Chiefly, within, the *Room of State* is fam'd
Of rich *Moſaick Work* divinely fram'd:
Of ſmall *Extent* to view, 'twill all things hide,
Heav'n's Azure *Arch* it ſelf not half ſo wide:
Here all the *Arts* their ſacred Manſion chuſe,
Here dwells the MOTHER of the Heav'n-born Muſe:
With wond'rous myſtic *Figures* round 'tis wrought
Inlaid with FANCY, and *enricht* with *Thought*:
With more than humane Skill depicted here
The various *Images of Things* appear;
What *Was*, or *Is*, or labours yet to *Be*
Within the Womb of Dark *Futurity*,
May *Stowage* in this wondrous *Storehouſe* find,
Yet leave unnumber'd empty *Cells* behind:
But ah! as faſt they come, they fly too faſt,
Not *Life or Happineſs are more in haſte*:
Only the *Firſt Great Mind* himſelf can ſtay
The *Fugitives*, and at *one Glance* ſurvey;
But thoſe whom he diſdains not to befriend,
Uncommon Souls, who neareſt Heav'n aſcend,
Far more, at once, than others comprehend:
Whate'er within this *ſacred Hall* you find,
Whate'er will *lodge* in your *capacious Mind*
Let *Judgment* ſort, and skilful *Method* bind;
And as from theſe you draw your antient Store
Daily ſupply the *Magazine* with more.
Furniſh'd with ſuch *Materials* he'll excel
Who when he *works* is ſure to work 'em *well*;

This ART alone, as *Nature* that beſtows,
And in *Perfection* both, th' accompliſh'd *Verſer* knows.
Knows to *perſuade*, and how to *ſpeak*, and when;
The *Rules of Life*, and *Manners* knows and *Men*:
Thoſe *narrow Lines* which *Good* and *Ill* divide;
Learning. And by what *Balance Juſt* and *Right* are try'd:
How *Kindred-Things* with *Things* are cloſely join'd;
How *Bodies* act, and by what *Laws* confin'd,
Supported, mov'd and rul'd by th' *Univerſal Mind.*
When the moiſt *Kids* or burning *Sirius* riſe;
Through what ambiguous Ways *Hyperion* flies,
And marks our *Upper* or the *Nether Skies.*
He knows thoſe *Strings* to *touch* with artful Hand
Which rule Mankind, and all the World command:
What *moves* the *Soul*, and every ſecret *Cell*
Where *Pity*, *Love*, and all the *Paſſions* dwell.
The *Muſic* of his *Verſe* can *Anger* raiſe,
Which with a ſofter *Stroak* he *ſmooths* and *lays*:
Can *Emulation*, *Terror*, all excite,
Compreſs the *Soul* with *Grief*, or *ſwell* with vaſt Delight.
If this you can, your *Care* you'll well beſtow,
And ſome new *Milton* or a *Spencer* grow;
If not, a *Poet* ne'er expect to be,
Content to *Rime*, like D[illegible]y or like me.
But here perhaps you'll ſtop me, and complain,
To ſuch *Impracticable Heights* I ſtrain
A Poet's *Notion*, that if *This* be *He*,
There ne'er was one, nor e'er is like to be.
——But ſoft, my Friend! may we not *copy* well
Tho far th' *Original* our *Art* excel?
Divine Perfection we our *Pattern* make
Th' *Idea* thence of *Goodneſs* juſtly take;
But they who *copy* neareſt, ſtill muſt fall
Immenſely ſhort of their *Original*;
Converſe. But *Wit* and *Genius*, *Senſe* and *Learning* join'd,
Will all come ſhort if *crude* and *unrefin'd*;
'Tis CONVERSE only melts the ſtubborn *Ore*
And *poliſhes* the *Gold*, too rough before:
So *fierce* the *Natural Taſte*, 'twill ne'er b' endur'd,
The *Wine* is *ſtrong*, but never rightly *cur'd.*

Style

STYLE is the *Dreſs* of *Thought*; a *modeſt* Dreſs, *Style.*
Neat, but not *gaudy*, will true *Critics* pleaſe:
Not *Fleckno*'s *Drugget*, nor a worſe Extream
All daub'd with *Point* and *Gold* at every Seam:
Who only *Antique Words* affects, appears
Like old King *Harry*'s Court, all Face and Ears;
Nor in a *Load* of *Wig* thy Viſage ſhrowd,
Like *Hairy Meteors glimm'ring through a Cloud*:
Happy are thoſe who here the *Medium* know,
We hate alike a *Sloven* and a *Beau*.
I would not follow *Faſhion* to the height
Cloſe at the *Heels*, nor yet be *out of Sight*:
Words alter, like our *Garments*, every day,
Now *thrive* and *bloom*, now *wither* and *decay*.
Let thoſe of greater *Genius* new *invent*,
Be you with thoſe in *Common Uſe* content.
A different *Style's* for *Proſe* and *Verſe* requir'd,
Strong Figures here, *Neat Plainneſs* there deſir'd:
A different *Set of Words* to both belong;
What *ſhines* in *Proſe*, is *flat* and *mean* in *Song*.
The *Turn*, the *Numbers* muſt be vary'd here,
And all things in a *different Dreſs* appear.
This every *School-Boy* laſh'd at *Eaton* knows,
Yet *Men of Senſe* forget when they *compoſe*,
And Father DRYDEN's Lines are ſomtimes *Proſe*.
A *vary'd Stile* do various Works require,
This *ſoft* as *Air*, and *tow'ring* that as *Fire*.
None than th' *Epiſtle* goes more *humbly* dreſt,
Tho *neat* 'twou'd be, and *decent* as the *beſt*.
Such as th' ingenious *Cenſor* may invite
Oft to return with eager *Appetite*;
So HORACE wrote, and ſo I'd *wiſh* to write.
Nor *creeps* it always, but can *mount* and *riſe*,
And with *bold Pinions* ſail along the Skies.
The ſelf-ſame Work of *different Style* admits,
Now *ſoft*, now *loud*, as beſt the *Matter* fits:
So Father THAMES from unexhauſted *Veins*,
Moves *clear* and *equable* along the *Plains*;
Yet ſtill of different *Depth* and *Breadth* is found,
And *humours* ſtill the *Nature* of the *Ground*.
READING will mend your *Style*, and raiſe it higher, *Reading.*
And *Matter* find to feed th' *Immortal Fire*:

But if you would the *Vulgar Herd* excel,
And juſtly gain the *Palm* of *Writing well*,
Waſt not your Lamp in ſcanning *Vulgar Lines*,
Where *groveling* all, or *One in twenty* ſhines:
With *Prudence* firſt among the *Antients* chuſe,
The *nobleſt* only, and the *beſt* peruſe;
Such HOMER is, ſuch VIRGIL's ſacred Page,
Which *Death* defie, nor yield to *Time* or *Age*;
New *Beauties* ſtill their *Vigorous Works* diſplay,
Their *Fruit* ſtill *mellows*, but can ne'er *decay*.
The *Modern Pens* not altogether ſlight,
Be *Maſter* of your *Language* e'er you *write*!
Immortal TILLOTSON with Judgment ſcan,
" That *Man of Praiſe*, *that ſomething more than Man*!
Ev'n thoſe who hate his *Aſhes* this adviſe,
As from black Shades reſplendent Lightning flies,
Unwilling Truths break through a *Cloud of Lies*.
He *Words* and *Things* for *mutual Aid* deſign'd,
Before at *Variance*, in juſt *Numbers* join'd;
He always *ſoars*, but never's *out of ſight*,
He taught us how to *Speak*, and *Think*, and *Write*.
If *Engliſh Verſe* you'd in *Perfection* ſee,
ROSCOMMON read, and *Noble* NORMANBY:
We *borrow* all from their *exhauſtleſs Store*,
Or little ſay they have not ſaid *before*.
Poor Inſects of a *Day*, we toil and ſtrive
To creep from *Duſt* to *Duſt*, and think we *live*;
Theſe weak *imperfect Beings* ſcarce enjoy
E'er *Death*'s rude Hand our *blooming Hopes* deſtroy:
With *Lynx*'s Eyes each others *Faults* we find,
But to our *own* how few who are not *blind*?
How *long is Art*, how *ſhort*, alas! our *Time*!
How *few* who can above the *Vulgar* climb,
Whoſe *ſtronger Genius* reach the *True Sublime*!
With *tedious Rules* which we our ſelves tranſgreſs,
We make the *Trouble more* who ſtrive to make it *leſs*.
But meanly why do you your *Fate* deplore,
Yet ſtill write on?——Why do a *Thouſand* more,
Who for their *own* or ſome *Forefathers* Crime
Are *doom'd* to wear their *Days* in *beating Rhime*?
But this a *Noble Patron* will redreſs,
And make you *better write*, tho you *write leſs*:

Whate'er

Whate'er a *diſcontented Mind* pretends,
Diſtinguiſh'd Worth can rarely miſs of *Friends*:
Do but *excel*, and he'll at laſt ariſe
Who from the *Duſt* may lift thee to the *Skies*;
For his *own Sake* will his *Protection* grant;
What *Horace* e'er did yet *Mecænas* want?
Or if the *World* its *Favours* ſhould refuſe,
With *barren Smiles* alone *reward* thy Muſe;
Be thy *own Patron*, thou no more wilt need,
For all will *court* thee if thy *Works ſucceed*;
At leaſt the few *Good Judges* will commend,
And *ſecret growing Praiſe* thy Steps attend.
Who ſhew'd *Columbus* where the *Indies* lay?
True to thy ſelf, *charge through*, and *force* to *Fame* the way!
If *Envy ſnarl*, indulge it no *Reply*,
Write *better* ſtill, and let it *burſt* and *die*!
Reſt pleas'd if you can pleaſe the *Wiſer Few*,
Since *to pleaſe all is more than Heav'n it ſelf can do.*
There are who *can* whate'er they *will* believe,
That *Bail*'s too hard for *Bail*y, *Three* are *Five*:
That Nature, Juſtice, Reaſon, Truth muſt fall,
With *Clear Idea's* they'll *confound* 'em all:
That *Parallels* may *travel* till they *meet*;
Faith they can find in *L—*, no *Senſe* in STILLINGFLEET.
Diſturb 'em not, but let 'em ſtill enjoy
Th' *unenvy'd Charms* of their *Eternal Moi.*
If to the *craggy Top of Fame* you riſe,
Thoſe who are *lab'ring after* ne'er *deſpiſe.*
Nor thoſe *above* on *Honour's* dazling Seat
Tho *diſoblig'd*, with *ſawcy Rudeneſs* treat,
Revenge not always is *below the Great.*
Their *Stronger Genius* may o'er thine prevail:
Wit, *Power* and *Anger* join'd but rarely fail.
Tho *Eagles* would not chuſe to *hawk* at *Flies*
They'd *ſnap* 'em, ſhould their *buzzing Swarms* ariſe
Importunate, and hurt their *Sun bright Eyes.*
Nor ſhould the *Muſes Birds* at *random* fly,
And *ſtrike* at *all*, leſt if they *ſtrike* they *die.*
Why ſhould we ſtill be *lazily content*
With thredbare *Schemes*, and nothing *new* invent?

All *Arts* beſides *improve*, *Sea*, *Air* and *Land*
Are every day with *nicer Judgment* ſcan'd,
And why ſhould *this* alone be at a *ſtand*?
Or *Nature* largely to the *Ancients* gave
And little did for *younger Children* ſave;
Or rather we *impartial Nature* blame
To hide our *Sloth*, and cover o'er our *Shame*;
As *Sinners*, when their *Reaſon's* drown'd in *Senſe*,
Fall out with *Heav'n*, and quarrel *Providence*.
Yet ſhould you our *Galenic Way* deſpiſe,
And ſome *new Colbatch* of the *Muſes* riſe;
No *Quarter* from the *College* hope, who ſit
Infallible at *Will's* and judg of *Senſe* and *Wit*:
Keep fair with theſe, or *Fame* you *court* in vain,
A ſtrict *Neutrality* at leaſt *maintain!*
Speak, like the wiſe *Italian*, well of all;
Who knows into what *Hands* he's doom'd to *fall*?
Write *oft* and *much*, at *firſt*, if you'd *write well*,
For he who ne'er *attempts* will ne'er *excel*;
Practice will *file* your *Verſe*, your *Thoughts refine*,
And *Beauty* give, and *Grace* to every Line:
The *Gnat* to fam'd *Æneis* led the way,
And our *Immortal* COWLEY once did *play*.
Let not the *Sun of Life* in vain decline,
Or *Time* run *waſte*; *No Day without a Line.*
Yet learn by me, my Friend, from *Errors* paſt;
O never *write*, or never *Print* in *Haſte!*
The *worſt Excuſe* Ill Authors e'er advance,
Which does, like *Lies*, a *ſingle Guilt* enhance.
Lay by your *Work*, and leave it on the *Loom*,
Which if at *mod'rate diſtance* you reſume,
A *Father's Fondneſs* you'll with Eaſe look through,
And *Objects* in a proper *Medium* view.
'Tis *Time* alone can *Strength* and *Ripeneſs* give;
A *Haſty Birth* can ne'er expect to *live*.
Fly *low* at firſt, you'll with Advantage *riſe*;
This *pleaſes* all, as that will all *ſurprize*.

The Subject. No *Work* attempt but where your *Strength* you know,
Be *Maſter of your Subject*, *Thoughts* will *flow*:
The *newer* 'tis, the *choicer Fruit* 'twill yield,
More *Room* you have to work if *large* your *Field*;

The

The *Sponge* you oftner than the *Pen* will want,
And rather *Reaſon* ſee to *prune* than *plant*;
Yet where the *Thoughts* are *barren*, *weak* and *thin*,
New *Cyons* ſhould be neatly *grafted* in.
If you with *Friend* or *Enemy* are bleſt, *A Judge.*
Your *Fancy's Offspring* ne'er can want a *Teſt*,
Tho *Both*, perhaps may *overſhoot* the *Mark*:
Firſt *Spite* with *Envy* charges in the *Dark*;
Unread they *damn*, and into *Paſſion* fall,
'Tis *Stuff*, 'tis *Blaſphemy*, 'tis *Nonſenſe* all;
They *ſleep* (when *doz'd before*) at every *Line*,
While your more *dang'rous Friend* exclaims,—'Tis fine,
'Tis *furiouſly Delightful*, 'tis *Divine*;
Th' *inſpiring God's* in ev'ry Page confeſs'd;
A COWLEY or a DRYDEN at the leaſt!
Yet you'll from *both* an *equal Judgment* frame
And ſtand the *neareſt Candidate* for *Fame*:
What *Envy praiſes*, or what *Friends diſlike*,
This bears the *Teſt*, and that the *Sponge* ſhould ſtrike.
Chuſe to be *abſent* when your *Cauſe* is try'd,
Leſt *Favour* ſhould the *partial Judge* miſguide;
Nor *others Thoughts* implicitly prefer,
Your *Friend's* a *Mortal*, and like *you*, may *err*.
Upon the *laſt Appeal* let *Reaſon* ſit,
And *here*, let *all Authority* ſubmit.
Diveſt your *ſelf of ſelf* whate'er you can,
And think the *Author* now ſome *other Man*.
A thouſand trivial *Lumber-Thoughts* will come,
A thouſand *Fagot-Lines* will crowd for room;
Reform your *Troops*, and no *Exemption* grant,
You'll gain in *Strength*, what you in *Numbers* want.
Nor yet *Infallibility* pretend;
He ſtill *errs on* who thinks he ne'er can *mend*:
Reject that *haſty*, that *preſumptuous Thought!*
None e'er but VIRGIL wrote without a *Fault*;
(Or *none* he has, or none that *I can find*,
Who, dazzled with his *Beauties*, to his *Moles* am blind.)
Who has the *leaſt* is *happieſt*, he the *beſt*,
Who *owns* and *mends* where he has once *tranſgreſt*.
Nor will *good Writers ſmaller Blots* deſpiſe,
Leſt thoſe neglected ſhould to *Crimes* ariſe;

Such *Venial Sins* indulg'd will *mortal* prove,
At leaſt they from *Perfection* far remove.
Nor *Critical Exactneſs* here deride,
It looks like *Sloth*, or *Ignorance*, or *Pride*;
Good Senſe is ſpoild in *Words unapt* expreſt,
And *Beauty* pleaſes more when 'tis *well dreſt*.

Method. Forget not METHOD if the *Prize* you'd gain,
'Twill coſt you *Thought*, but richly pays the *Pain*;
What *firſt*, what *ſecond*, or what *laſt* to place,
What here will *ſhine*, and there the *Work* diſgrace.
Before you build, your MODEL juſtly lay,
And ev'ry Part in *Miniature* ſurvey;
Where airy *Terraces* ſhall threat the *Skies*,
Where *Columns* tow'r, or neat *Pilaſters* riſe;
Where cool *Caſcades* come *roaring* down the Hill,
Or where the *Cryſtal Nymph* a *moſſie Baſon* fill:
What *Statues* are to grace the *Front* deſign'd,
And how to throw the *meaner Rooms* behind.
Draw the *Main Strokes* at firſt, 'twill ſhew your *Skill*,
Life-Touches you may add whene'er you will.
Ev'n *Chance* will ſometimes all our *Art* excel,
The *angry Foam* we ne'er can *hit* ſo well.
A *ſudden Thought*, all beautiful and bright
Shoots in and *ſtums* us with *amazing Light*;
Secure the *happy Moment* e'er 'tis paſt,
Not *Time* more *ſwift*, or *Lightning* flies ſo faſt.
All muſt be *free* and *eaſie*, or in vain
You *whip* and *ſpur*, and the *wing'd Courſer* ſtrain:
When *foggy Clouds* hang *bellying* in the *Skies*,
Or *ſleety Boreas* through th' *Horizon* flies;
He then, whoſe *Muſe* produces ought that's *fine*,
His *Head* muſt have a *ſtronger Turn* than mine:
Like *Sybils Leaves* the *Train of Thoughts* are rang'd,
Which by *rude Winds* diſturb'd, are *nothing* if they're chang'd.
Or are there too in *Writing ſofter Hours*?
Or is't that *Matter* nobler *Mind* o'erpow'rs,
Which boaſts her *native Liberty* in vain,
In *Mortal Fetters* and a *Slaviſh Chain*?
Death only can the *Gordian Knot* divide,
Tho by what ſecret wondrous *Bands* 'tis ty'd,
Ev'n *Reaſon's* ſelf muſt own ſhe can't decide:

For as the *rapid Tides* of *Matter* turn
We're fann'd with *Pleaſure* or with *Anger* burn,
We *Love* and *Hate* again, we *Joy* and *Mourn*.
Now the ſwift *Torrent* high and headſtrong grows,
Shoots through the Dykes, and all the Banks *o'erflows*;
Strait the *capricious Waters* backward fly,
The *Pebbles* rake and leave the Bottom *dry*;
Watch the *kind Hour* and ſeize the *riſing Flood*,
Elſe will your *dreggy Poem* taſte of *Mud*.
Hence old and batter'd *Hackneys* of the *Stage*,
By long Experience render'd *Wiſe* and *Sage*,
With pow'rful *Juices* reſtive Nature urge,
Or elſe with *Bays* of old, they *bleed* and *purge*;
Thence, as the *Prieſteſs* from her *Cave* inſpir'd,
When to his *Cell* the *rancid God* retir'd,
Double Entendres their fond *Audience* blin d,
Their *boaſted Oracles* abuſe Mankind:
Falſe Joys around their *Hearts* in *Slumbers* play,
And the warm *tingling Blood* ſteals faſt away;
The *Soul* grows *dizzy*, loſt in *Senſes Night*,
And melts in pleaſing *Pain* and vain *Delight*.
Not that the *ſowreſt Critick* can reprove
The *ſoft* the moving *Scenes* of *Virtuous Love*:
Life's Sunny Morn, which wears, alas! too faſt;
Pity it e'er ſhould *hurt*, or ſhould not *always laſt*!
Has *Bankrupt Nature* then no *more* to give,
Or by a *Trick* perſuades Mankind to *live*?
No—when with *Prudence* join'd 'tis ſtill the *ſame*
Or *ripens* into *Friendſhip's* nobler *Name*,
The *Matter* pure, immortal is the *Flame*.
No *Fool*, no *Debauchee* could ever prove
The *honeſt Luxury of virtuous Love*;
Then *curs'd* are thoſe who that *fair Name* abuſe,
And holy *Hymen's* ſacred *Fillets* looſe;
Who *poiſon Fountains*, and *infect* the *Air*,
Ruine the *Witty*, and *debauch* the *Fair*;
With *nauſeous Images* their *Scenes* debaſe
At once their Country's *Ruine* and *Diſgrace*.
Weigh well each *Thought* if all be *juſt* and *Right*,
For thoſe muſt clearly *think* who clearly *write*.
Nothing *obſcure*, *equivocal*, or *mean*,
Much leſs what is or *impious* or *obſcene*:

Altho'

Altho the tempting *Serpent* play his part,
And wind in *glitt'ring Folds* around thy *Heart*;
Reject the *trait'rous Charmer*, tear him thence,
And keep thy *Vertue* and thy *Innocence*.
In wild *America's* rank *Champaign* grows
A *Tree* which *Europe* oft too dearly knows;
It riſes high in *cool inchanting Groves*,
The Manchinel, or Eves Apple. Whoſe green broad Leaves the fainting *Trav'ler* loves;
Fair is the treach'rous *Fruit*, and charms your *Eye*,
But ah! beware! for if you *taſte* you *die*.
Too well alas! it *thrives* when *planted* here,
Its deadly Branches ſhade our *Theatre*.
Of *Meaſures*, *Numbers*, *Pauſes* next I ſing,
And reſt the breathleſs *Muſe* with cautious *Wing*:
Of *Embryo Thoughts*, unripen'd yet by Time,
The Rules of *Verſe*, of *Quantity* and *Rhime*:
With trembling Steps through *Shades* unknown I ſtray,
And mark a *rugged* and a *dubious* way;
Yet ſome ſmall *glimm'ring Light* will hence be ſhow'd,
And future *Trav'lers* may enlarge the *Road*.
Meaſure. Of CHAUCER's Verſe we ſcarce the *Meaſures* know,
So *rough* the *Lines*, and ſo *unequal* flow;
Whether by Injury of *Time* defac'd,
Or *careleſs* at the *firſt*, and writ in *haſte*;
Or *courſly*, like old *Ennius*, he *deſign'd*
What After-days have *poliſh'd* and *refin'd*.
SPENCER more *ſmooth* and *neat*, and none than He
Could better skill of *Engliſh Quantity*;
Tho by his *Stanza* cramp'd, his *Rhimes* leſs chaſt,
And *antique Words* affected all diſgrac'd;
Yet *vaſt* his *Genius*, *noble* were his *Thoughts*,
Whence equal Readers wink at *leſſer* Faults.
From *France* their *Alexandrins* we receive
Which more of *Liberty* and *Compaſs* give;
Hence by our dull Tranſlators were they us'd,
Nor CHAPMAN nor old STERNHOLD theſe refus'd;
They borrow from *Hexameters* their *Feet*,
Which with *Aſclepiads* and *Iambicks* meet;
Yet in the midſt we ſtill a *Weakneſs* ſee,
Their *Muſic* gives us no *Variety*.
More *num'rous* the *Pentameter* and *ſtrong*,
Which to our *Saxon Fathers* did belong.

In

In this their antient *Edda* * seems to write,
Mysterious Rhimes, and *horrid* to the *sight*:
Their *Runic Staves* in this on *Rocks* engrav'd,
Which long th' Assaults of *Time* it self have brav'd.
In this our antient *British Bards* delight;
And, if I measure his *rough Numbers* right,
In this old *Taliessin* us'd to write †.
This still *Possession* keeps, few else we read,
And *Right* as well as *Fact* may justly plead;
Altho the *French Intruders* oft pursue
Their *baffled Title*, and their *Claim* renew;
Too oft *Impressions* on our *Armies* make,
Cut off our *Straglers* and our *Out-Guards* take;
Which lazily our Authors now admit,
And call th' *Excursions of Luxuriant Wit*;
With *Badger-Feet* the two-top'd *Mount* we climb,
And stalk from *Peak* to *Peak* on *Stilts of Rime*.
Sweet WALLER's *Dimeter* we most approve
For cheerful *Songs* and *moving Tales of Love*,
Which for *Heroic Subjects* wants of *Strength*,
Too *short*, as *Alexandrins* err in *Length*.

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* *Vide Edda Sæmundi* —— *apud Sheringham. de Gentis Anglorum Origine, pag.* 28, 29.

Hiaelp heiter eitt eun thad thier hialpa mun
Vid Sekum og Sottum giorv ollum,
Thad kann eg annad er thorfa Ita
Syner their ed vilia lakner lisfa.

I know your only Help, the pow'rful Charm
That aids in ev'ery Grief and every Harm,
I know the Leaches Craft, and what they need
Who Doctors in that Noble Art proceed.

† *Vide* British Chronicle, *and* Taliessin's *Prophecies*;

Prryff fard l'yffred in ydwyfi i Elphin
Am gwalad gynefio ymmeo Goribbin.
Ionas ddewn am golwis Merddin
Bebach Pob Brenmam geilw Taliesin.
Gwae a gasglo olud Tra foyna bud,
Gwae erbin didd brawd ni chospo i gnawd,
Gwae ni cheidw i gail ag ef yrfugail,
Gwae in cheidw i ddesaud chag bleidduo.

Me *Elphin* now his Bard may justly boast
Who sung of old amid the Fire-wing'd Host:
Once *Merlin* was I call'd, well known to Fame,
Whom future Kings shall *Taliessin* name.
Wo to the Wretch who Wealth by Rapine gains,
And wo to him who Fasts and Pray'rs refrains;
Wo to the Shepherds who their Flocks betray,
And will not drive the *Romish* Wolves away.

Our *Ear's* the Judge of *Cadence*; nicely weigh
What *Conſonants* rebel, and what obey;
What *Vowels* mixt compoſe a pleaſing *Sound*,
And what the tender *Organs* grate and wound.
Nor at thy Reader's *Mercy* chuſe to lie,
Nor let *his Judgment* want of *thine* ſupply:
So *eaſie* let thy *Verſe* ſo *ſmoothly* fall,
They muſt be read *aright* if read at all.
Numbers. Nor *equal Numbers* will for all ſuffice,
The *Sock* creeps low, the *Tragic Buskins* riſe:
None knew this *Art* ſo well, ſo well did uſe
As did the *Mantuan Shepherd's* Heav'nly Muſe:
He marry'd *Sound* and *Senſe*, at odds before,
We hear his *Scylla bark*, *Charybdis roar*;
And when in Fields his *Fiery Courſers* meet
The *hollow Ground* ſhakes underneath their Feet:
Yet nicer *Ears* can taſte a *Diff'rence* when
Of *Flocks* and *Fields* he *ſings*, or *Arms* and *Men*.
If I our *Engliſh Numbers* taſte aright,
We in the grave *Iambic* moſt delight:
Each *ſecond* Syllable the Voice ſhould *reſt*,
Spondees may ſerve, but ſtill th' *Iambic's* beſt:
Th' unpleaſing *Trochee* always makes a *Blot*,
And lames the *Numbers*; or, if this forgot,
A ſtrong *Spondaic* ſhould the *next* ſucceed,
The feeble *Wall* will a good *Buttreſs* need:
Long *Writing*, *Obſervation*, *Art* and *Pain*
Muſt here unite if you the *Prize* would gain.
Pauſes. *Pauſe* is the *Reſt* of *Voice*, the poor *Remains*
Of *antient Song* that ſtill our *Verſe* retains:
The *ſecond Foot* or *third's* our uſual *Reſt*,
Tho more of *Art's* in *varying* oft expreſt.
At ev'ry Word the *Pauſe* is ſometimes * made,
And wond'rous *Beauty* every where diſplaid:
—But here we *gueſs*, and *wander* in the *dark*;
How ſhould a hoodwink'd *Archer* hit the Mark?
The little *Glimpſe* that DRYDEN gives, is more
Than all our *careleſs Writers* knew before;

* *Olli ſedato reſpondit corde Latinus.* Virg.

A few *Chance Lines* may ſmooth and roundly fly,
But ſtill no Thanks to us, we know not why.
He finds *Examples*, we the *Rule* muſt make,
Tho who without a Guide may not miſtake ?
(*a*) " *Tho deep yet clear, tho gentle yet not dull,*
" *Strong without Rage, without o'erflowing full.*
If we that *famous Riddle* can unty,
Their brighteſt *Beauties* in the *Pauſes* lie,
To Admiration *vary'd*; next to theſe
The *Numbers* juſtly order'd charm and pleaſe:
Each *Word*, each happy *Sound* is big with *Senſe*,
They all *deface* who take one *Letter* thence.
But little more of *Quantity* we know *Quantity.*
Than what our *Accent* does, and *Cuſtom* ſhow :
The *Latin Fountains* often we forſake,
As they the *Greek*; nay *diff'rent Ages* take
A *diff'rent Path*; *Perfume* and *Envy* now
We ſay, which *Ages paſt* would ſcarce allow:
If no *Poſition* make our *Accent* ſtrong
Moſt *Syllables* are either *ſhort* or *long*.
Primitive Verſe was grac'd with pleaſing *Rhimes*, *Rhime.*
The *Blank* a lazy Fault of *After-times*;
Nor need we other proof of this to plead
With thoſe the ſacred (*b*) *Hebrew Hymns* can *read*:
If this to *lucky Chance* alone be *due*,
Why *Rhime* they not in *Greek* and *Latin* too?
(*c*) PINDAR at firſt his antient *Copy* trac'd,
And ſometimes equal *Sounds* his *Numbers* grac'd;

(*a*) *Mr.* Dryden's *Riddle, in his Preface to* Virgil.
(*b*) *This was obſerv'd before Mr.* Le Clerc *was born. Vide* Song of the Well, *Num.* 21. 17.

עלי באר ענו לה
באר חפרוה
שרים כרוה
נדיבי העם
במחקק במשענתם

Vide Pſal. 80, & 81. *Where ſome Verſes have Treble, others Quadruple Rhimes, four in one Verſe.*
(*c*) Ode 1. Ἄριστον μὲν ὕδωρ
Ὁ δὲ Χρυσὸς αἰθόμενον πῦρ, &c.

Ἄλλο θαλπνότερον
Ἐν ἀμέρᾳ φαεινὸν ἄστρον.

Till

Till with the more than *human Labour* tir'd,
He *drop'd* his *Rhime*, and own'd him *uninſpir'd*.
ORPHEUS and HOMER too, who firſt did dream
Of *num'rous Gods*, and left the *One Supreme*,
Religion both and *Poetry* did wrong,
Apoſtatiz'd from *Rhime*, and loſt the *Soul of Song*.
Yet ſtill ſome weak and glimm'ring *Sparks* remain'd,
And ſtill our *Great Forefathers* this retain'd;
Nor *Inundations* of *Barbarian Rome*,
Vide p. 13. Our antient *Rhime* could wholly overcome.
Ne'er *cramp* thy *Reaſon* for ſome paltry *Chime*,
Nor ſacrifice *Good Senſe* to *Numbers* and to *Rhime*:
Both may be *ſav'd* and made *good Friends*; and here
The Poets *Art* and *Happineſs* appear:
But when ſome *ſtubborn Word* denies to draw
In *Numbers*, and defies the *Muſes Law*,
Reject it ſtrait, unworthy ſuch a *Grace*,
Another *yoke* which better fills the *Place*:
Much *Reading* will thy *Poverty* amend
And *Taggs* without the help of *Crambo* lend.
The *Double Rhime* is *antiquated* grown,
Or us'd in *Satyr* or *Burleſque* alone;
Nor loves our ſtronger *Tongue* that tinkling *Chime*,
The *Darling* of the *French*, a *Female Rhime*.
Now, daring *Muſe!* attempt a *ſtronger Flight*,
Beyond a *Vulgar Verſer's* cautious Height,
Beyond thy ſelf, and conſecrate to *Fame*
Thoſe who a *Title* to the *Laurel* claim,
And may to after-times *embalm* thy Name;
Commend the *Good*, to all but *Vice* be kind,
And caſt the *ſmaller Faults* in *ſhades* behind;
Who *firſt*, who *next*; the *Balance* juſtly hold,
As that which ſhines above, and flames with *Heav'nly Gold*.
Great N*orman*—BY the firſt, ROSCOMMON gone,
He rules our *Empire* now of *Wit* alone:
The *Beauties* he of *Verſe* exactly knows,
The famous DRYDEN's not more ſmoothly flows:
Had ORPHEUS half ſo ſweetly mourn'd his *Fate*,
As VIRGIL ſung, or *Sh*——*d* did *tranſlate*;
H' had made the *Manes* once again *relent*,
They would again *Eurydice* have ſent:

Death's Temple we with *ſacred Awe* ſurvey,
With *Admiration* read his *Great Eſſay*:
Was *Art* or bounteous *Nature* here more *kind*?
Strong Senſe! Uncommon *Learning*! *Thoughts* refin'd!
A *Godlike Perſon*, and an *equal Mind*!
The *next* in Dignity, if not the *ſame*,
Is Deathleſs D——t's lov'd and noble *Name*:
How did he ſing, (liſten'd the *Heav'nly Quire*;)
The Wond'rous Notes of DAVID'S *Royal Lyre*!
Ah! *Why no more*? muſt we for ever long
And vainly languiſh for ſo *ſweet* a *Song*?
The next is *Tityrus*, who not diſdains
To read his *Name* among the *tuneful Swains*;
Unweary'd in his *Prince*'s glorious *Cauſe*,
As he of *Faith*, Defender of the *Laws*;
Eaſie to all but to himſelf, he ſhares
His Monarch's *Favours*, and his Monarch's *Cares*:
His flowing *Language* cloaths his *maſſie Senſe*,
Nor makes with *pompous Words* a vain pretence,
Sound without *Soul*, to *Wit* and *Eloquence*.
Tho *Great*, he's ſtill the ſame he was before:
—I *ſue for nothing*, and I'll ſay no more.
Montague left the *Muſes* peaceful *Seat*,
And bore the *Cares* and *Honours* of the *Great*:
The *Pollio* he of our *Auguſtan* days,
Who *Wit* rewards with more than *hungry Praiſe*;
True Worth his *Patronage* can never miſs,
He has his *Prince's Smiles* and *that* has *his*.
Nor ſhould he paſs unprais'd whom all admire,
Who, mixt with *Seraphs*, rules the *Weſtern* Quire;
Flowing and *pure* his unexhauſted *Vein*,
As Silver *Thames*, which, rolling down the *Plain*,
Salutes his *Sacred Dome*.——
But thoſe *profane* who meanly thus *commend*,
Th' *Immortal Cowley*'s and the *Muſes* Friend.
Of *matchleſs* DRYDEN only *Dryden*'s Skill
Could juſtly ſay enough,— of *Good* or *Ill*.
Envy muſt own he has our *Tongue refin'd*,
And manly *Senſe* with tend'reſt *Softneſs* join'd:
His *Verſe* would *Stones* and *Trees* with *Soul* inſpire,
As did the *Theban* and the *Thracian* Lyre:

Paraphraſe on Pſal. 148. O Azure Vaults, &c.

His youthful *Fire* within, like *Etna*, *glows*,
Tho *Venerable Age* around his Temples *ſnows*:
If from the *modern* or the *antient* Store
He *borrows* ought, he always *pays* 'em more:
So much *improv'd*, each *Thought*, ſo *fine* appears,
WALLER or OVID ſcarce durſt own 'em *theirs*.
The Learned *Goth* has ſcowr'd all *Europe*'s Plains,
France, *Spain*, and fruitful *Italy* he *drains*,
From every Realm and every Language *gains*:
His *Gains* a *Conqueſt* are, and not a *Theft*;
He wiſhes ſtill new *Worlds* of *Wit* were left:
Thus *haughty Rome*, when, all the *Firm* ſurpaſs'd,
Her *Eagles* found our *moated World* at laſt;
Touching upon th' *unhoſpitable* Coaſt,
Good Laws beſtow'd for our *wild Freedom* loſt;
With *Arts of Peace* our ſtubborn Soil manur'd,
And *naked Limbs* from *Froſt* and *Sun* ſecur'd:
—But ah! how *dear* the *Price* of all we gain!
What *Shoals of Vices* with 'em croſs'd the Main?
What *Pride*, what *Luxury*, a foul, an odious Train?
Who weighs, like *Galgacus*, the *Good* with *Ill*,
Would wiſh they'd let us been *Barbarians* ſtill:
Such *thankleſs Pains Ignatian Firebrands* take
An *honeſt Pagan* ſpoil, and a *bad Chriſtian* make.

Bleſt be kind Heav'n, which wrap'd me in a *Gown*,
And drew me early from the *fatal Town*!
And bleſt *Her Name*, to endleſs Ages bleſt,
Who gave my weary *Muſe* this calm *Retreat* and *Reſt*.
True to my God, my Country, and my Friend,
Here, may I Life, not *wholly uſeleſs*, ſpend,
Steal through the World, and *ſmiling* meet my *End*!
I envy not *Great Dryden*'s loftier Strain
Of *Arms* and *Men* deſign'd to entertain,
Princes and *Courts*, ſo I but pleaſe the *Plain*:
Nor would I barter *Profit* for *Delight*,
Nor would have *writ like him*, *like him to write*.
If there's *Hereafter*, and a laſt *Great Day*,
What *Fire*'s enough to *purge* his *Stains* away?
How will he *wiſh* each *lewd* applauded *Line*
Which makes *Vice pleaſing*, and *Damnation ſhine*,
Had been as *dull* as honeſt *Quarles* or *mine*!

With

With *ſixty Years of Lewdneſs* reſt content!
It mayn't be yet *too late*, O yet *Repent!*
Ev'n *Thee* our *injur'd Altar* will receive;
While yet there's *Hopes* fly to its *Arms* and live!
So ſhall for *Thee* their *Harps* the *Angels* ſtring,
And the *Returning Prodigal* ſhall ſing;
New *Joys* through all the *Heav'nly Hoſt* be ſhown
In *Numbers* only *ſweeter* than thy *own.*

CONGREVE from *Ireland* wond'ring we receive,
Would he the *Town's looſe way* of Writing leave,
More Worth than all their Forfeit Lands will give:
Juſtneſs of *Thought*, a *Courtly Style*, and clear,
And well-wrought *Paſſions* in his *Works* appear:
None knows with *finer Strokes* our Souls to move,
And as he pleaſe we *ſmile*, or *weep*, or *love.*
When *Dryden* goes, 'tis he muſt fill the *Chair*,
With Congreve *only* Congreve *can compare.*
Yet, tho he *natural* is as untaught Loves,
His *Style* as *ſmooth* as *Cytherea's* Doves,
When e'er unbyaſs'd *Judges* read him o'er,
He ſometimes *nodds*, as *Homer* did before:
Some Lines his moſt *Admirers* ſcarce would pleaſe,
Nor B——s Verſe alone could *raiſe Diſeaſe.* *

For *ſmooth* and *well turn'd Lines* we *Tate* admire,
Who has in *Juſtneſs* what he wants in *Fire*:
Each *Rhime*, each *Syllable* well-weigh'd and fair,
His *Life* and *Manners* ſcarce more *regular.*

With *Strength* and *Flame* prodigious D——s writes
Of *Love's* ſoft *Wars*, and cruel martial *Fights*:
Scarce LEE himſelf ſtrove with a *mightier Load*,
Or *labour'd* more beneath th' *Incumbent God*:
Whate'er of old to *Rome* or *Athens* known,
What *France* or *We* have *glean'd*, 'tis all his *own.*

How few can equal *Praiſe* with C——*ch* obtain,
Who made *Lucretius ſmooth*, and *chaſt*, and *plain*?
Courted by *Fame* he could her *Charms* deſpiſe,
Still woo'd by that *falſe Fair* he ſtill denies,
And preſs'd, for *Refuge* to the *Altar* flies;
Like *votive Tablets* offers up his *Bays*,
" *And leaves to our lewd Town the Drudgery of Plays.*

In lofty *Raptures*, born on Angels Wings,
Above the *Clouds*, above *Caſtalian Springs*,
N—— inſpir'd, of *God* and *Nature* ſings;

And

* *Vide* Collier's *Reflexions on* Mourning Bride, *and* Garth's *Diſpenſary.*

And if one *Glance* on this *poor World* he throw,
If e'er he mind the *Croud* and *Buzz* below;
Pities our *fruitleſs Pains* for *Fame* and *Praiſe*,
And wonders why we *drudge* for *Crowns* and *Bays*.
Could B—*rown*—be *ſober*, many he'd excel,
Few know the *Antients*, or could uſe ſo well;
But ah! his *Genius* with his *Virtue's* fled,
Condemn'd to *Want of Grace* and *Want of Bread*:
Ev'n Envy B—*ckmore's Subject* muſt confeſs
Exact and *rare*, a *curious Happineſs*,
Nor many could the *Fable better dreſs*:
Of *Words* what *Compaſs*, and how vaſt a *Store*!
His *Courage* and his *Vertue's* only more:
More various *Scenes of Death* his *Fights* diſplay
Then *Aghrim's* Field or *Landen's* fatal Day:
Let beauteous *Elda's Tears* and *Paſſion* prove
His *Soul* is not *unknowing how to love*:
Diſrob'd of *Clouds* he view'd the *Stagyrite*
As *Nature* he, confeſs'd to *Human ſight*:
His *Rules* ſurveys, and traces to their *Springs*,
Where the *blind Bard* of flaming *Ilium* ſings;
Thence with the *Mantuan Swan* in narrower Rings,
Tho more *exact*, he, ſtooping from his height,
Reviews the ſame *fierce Wars*, and *Gods* and *Heroes* fight:
That beauteous antient *Palace* he ſurveys
Which *Maro's Hands* had only Strength to raiſe,
Models from thence, and *copies* every *Grace*:
Each *Page* is big with *Virgil's Manly Thought*,
To *follow him too near's a glorious Fault*.
He dar'd be *virtuous* in the *World's* Deſpite,
While D—*ryd*—*n lives he dar'd a Modeſt Poem write*.
Who can th' ingenious S——*y's* Praiſe refuſe,
Who ſerves a grateful *Prince*, and grateful *Muſe*?
Or P——*r* read unmov'd, whoſe every *Page*
So juſt a *Standard* to the opening *Age*?
Neat S—*ther*—*n's* courtly *Vein's* correct and clear,
Nor ſhall he miſs his *Praiſe* and *Station* here:
Nor ſhould the *reſt* whom I *unnam'd* muſt leave,
(Tho ſuch *Omiſſion* they'll with eaſe *forgive*:)
Unknown to me, let each his *Works* commend,
Since *Virtue*, *Praiſe*, as *Shame* does *Vice*, attend.

Poets

Poets, like *Leaves* and *Words*, their *Periods* know,
Now *freſh* and *green*, now *ſear* and wither'd grow;
Or *burnt* by *Autumn's* Heat, and *Winter's* Cold,
Or a *new haſty Birth* ſhoves off the *old*.
Happy are thoſe, and ſuch are *ſome* of ours,
Who bleſt by bounteous *Heav'n's* indulgent *Show'rs*
Bear wholſome *Fruit*, and not gay *pois'nous Flow'rs*:
Who would not ev'n a *Lawreat's ſelf* commence
Or at their *Virtue's* or their *Faith's* Expence:
Renounce their *Creed* to ſave a *wretched Play*,
And for a *crowded Houſe* and *full Third Day*
At one *bold Stroke* throw all their *Heav'n* away.
What gain'd *Euripides* by all his *Senſe*,
Who madly rail'd againſt a *Providence*?
Apoſtate Poets firſt ſeduc'd *Mankind*,
But ours upon the Pagan Herd refin'd;
They Vertue *prais'd* at leaſt, which ours *abuſe*,
And more than *Paganize* the Heav'n-born Muſe:
No Signs of *Grace*, or of *Repentance* ſhow,
Like *Strumpets laſh'd*, more *impudent* they grow.
Now learn, my Friend, and freely I'll impart
My *little All* in this delightful Art:
Of *Poetry* the various *Forms* and *Kinds*,
The wideſt, ſtrongeſt *Graſp* of human Minds:
Not *all* from *all*, but *ſome* from *each* I take,
Since we a *Garland* not a *Garden* make.
Epic's the *firſt* and *beſt*, which mounting ſings *Epic.*
In *Mighty Numbers worthy mighty Things*,
Of *High Adventures*, *Heroes*, *Gods* and *Kings*:
By lively *Schemes* the Mind to *Vertue* forms,
And far beyond *unactive Precept* warms.
The *Subject* may be either *feign'd* or *true*,
Too Old it ſhould not be, but leſs *too New*:
Narration mixt with *Action* moſt delights,
Intrigues and *Councils*, vary'd *Games* and *Fights*:
Nothing ſo *long* as may the Reader *tire*,
But all the juſt well-mingled *Scenes* admire.
Your *Heroe* may be *virtuous*, muſt be *brave*;
Nothing that's *mean* ſhould his great Soul enſlave:
Yet Heav'ns unequal *Anger* he may *fear*,
And for his *ſuffering Friends* indulge a *Tear*:
Thus when the *Trojans Navy* ſcatter'd lay
He *wept*, he *trembled*, and to Heav'n did *pray*;

But when bright *Glory beckon'd* from afar,
And *Honour* call'd him out to meet the *War*;
Like a fierce *Torrent* pouring o'er the *Banks*,
Or *Mars* himſelf, he *thunders* through the *Ranks*;
Death walks before, while he a *Foe* could find,
Horror and *Ruine* mark long frightful *Lanes* behind.
Machines. For *worn* and *old* MACHINES few Readers care,
They're like the *Paſtboard Chaos in the Fair*:
If ought ſurprizing you expect to ſhew,
The *Scenes* if not the *Perſons* ſhould be *new*:
With *both* does MILTON's wondrous Scheme begin,
The *Pandemonium*, *Chaos*, *Death* and *Sin*;
Which *D——s* had with like *Succeſs* aſſay'd,
Had not the *Porch* of *Death's Grim Court* been made
Too *wide*, and there th' impatient *Reader* ſtaid.
And *G——h*, tho *barren* is his *Theme* and *mean*,
By this has *reach'd* at leaſt the fam'd *Lutrine*.
If *tir'd* with ſuch a plenteous *Feaſt* you call
For a far meaner *Banquet*, *Meal* and *Wall*;
The *beſt* I have is *yours*, tho 'tis too *long*,
And what's behind will into *Corners* throng.
A *Place* there is, if *Place* 'tis nam'd aright,
Where ſcatter'd *Rays* of pale and ſickly *Light*,
Fringe o'er the *Confines* of *Eternal Night*.
Shorn of their *Beams* the *Sun* and *Phœbe* here
Like the *fix'd Stars*, through *Glaſſes* view'd, appear;
Or thoſe faint *Seeds of Light*, which juſt diſplay
Ambiguous Splendor round the *milky Way*;
The *Waſte* of *Chaos*, whoſe *Auguſter* Reign
Does thoſe more barren doubtful Realms diſdain:
Here dwell thoſe *hideous Forms* which oft repair
To breath our upper *World's* more *chearful* Air
Bleak *Envy*, grinding *Pain*, and meagre *Care*;
Diſeaſe and *Death*, the *Goddeſs* of the *place*,
Death, the *leaſt frightful Form of all their Race*;
Ambition, *Pride*, falſe *Joys* and *Hopes* as vain,
Lewdneſs and *Luxury* compoſe her Train:
How large their *Intereſt*, and how vaſt their *Sway*
Amid the wide invaded Realms of *Day!*
Soon would they our frail Race of *Mortals* end,
Did not kind *Heav'n* auſpicious *Succours* lend;
Sweet *Angel-Forms*, *Peace*, *Virtue*, *Health* and *Love*,
How near ally'd, how like to thoſe *above!*

These often drive the *Air*, those *Furies* chace
And fetter in their own *infernal Place*:
These lent at once NASSAW and ENGLAND Aid,
And bright MARIA to our *Shores* convey'd:
Her, all their *Pow'r* and all their *Charms* they gave,
To *govern* what her *Heroe* came to *save*.
Nor *Envy* this, who in her noisome Cell
By *Traitors* in their swift *Descent to Hell*,
Her rising *Glories* heard, then with a *Groan*
She crawl'd before her *Sov'reign's* direful *Throne*:
A *Pile of Sculls* the odious *Fantom* bore,
With *Bones* half-naked mixt, and dropping putrid *Gore*;
There thus—Shall *Heav'n* defraud us of our *Reign*,
And BRITAIN, only BRITAIN break her *Chain*?
What can we there, while more than *mortal Grace*
Forbids our *Entrance*, and secures the *Place*?
Awhile I *gaz'd* and *viewd* her as I *fled*,
When first she came, till half my *Snakes* were dead;
And had I tarry'd longer near her *Throne*,
Had soon some base *insipid Vertue* grown:
So fast the wide *progressive Ills* increase,
If longer unoppos'd our *Power* will cease;
The base degenerate World *dissolve* to Peace;
Our boasted *Empire* there will soon be o'er,
And *Mortals* tremble at our *Arms* no more.
She said, her *Tidings* all the *Court* affright,
And doubled *Horror* fill'd the *Realms of Night*:
Till out foul *Lewdness* leap'd, and shook the Place,
The *fulsom'st Fiend* of all th' *infernal Race*;
A crusted *Leprosie* deform'd her *Face*;
With half a *bloodshot* Eye the *Fury* glar'd,
Yet when for *Mischief* she above prepar'd,
She *painted* and she *dress'd*, those *Arts* she knew,
And to *her self* her self a *Stranger* grew,
(Thus *old* and batter'd *Bawds* behind the Scenes,
New *rigg'd* and *dawb'd*, pass on the *Stage* for *Queens*;)
Nor yet, she cries, of *Britain* we'll *despair*
I've yet some *trusty Friends* in *Ambush* there,
All is not lost, we've still the *Theatre*:
I'll batter *Virtue* thence, nor fear to gain
New *Subjects daily* from her *hated Reign*;
Is not Great *D*—— ours and all his *Train*?

He

He knows he has new *Laurels* here prepar'd,
For thoſe he loſt *above*, a juſt Reward,
For his wide *Conqueſts* he'll *command the Guard*:
Headed by him one *Foot* we'll ſcorn to yield,
Tho *Virtue's* glitt'ring *Squadrons* drive the *Field*:
Grant me, Dread *Sov'reign!* a *Detachment* hence
We'll not be long alone on our *Defence*,
But hope to drive the proud *Aſſailants* thence.
Bold *Blaſphemy* ſhall lead our black *Forlorn*,
With *Colours* from *Heav'n's Cryſtal Ramparts* torn,
And *Anti-Thunderrs* arm'd; *Profaneneſs* next
Their *Canon* ſeize, and turn the *Sacred Text*
Againſt th' *Aſſailants*; brave *Revenge* and *Rage*
Shall our *main Batt'ry* ply, and guard the *Stage*.
—But moſt I on dear *Ribaldry* depend,
We've not a *ſurer* or a *ſtronger Friend*.
Now ſhall ſhe *broad* and *open* to the Skie,
Now *cloſe* behind ſome *double Meaning* lye;
Now with *ſulphureous Rivers* lave the *Trench*,
And choak th' *Aſſailants* with infernal *Stench*;
Each nicer *Vertue* from the *Walls* repel,
And *Heav'n* it ſelf regale with the Perfumes of *Hell*.
This from the World our dreaded *Foe* will drive,
As *murm'ring Bees* are forc'd to leave their *Hive*;
Souls ſo *refin'd* ſuch *Vapours* cannot bear,
But ſeek their *native Heav'n* and purer Air:
When *She* and all her heav'nly *Guards* are gone
And her bright *Heroe* abſent, all's our own:
If any *pious Fools* ſhould make a ſtand,
To ſtop our *Progreſs* through the conquer'd Land,
They ſoon ſhall paſs for *hot-brain'd Viſionairs*,
We'll run 'em down with *Ridicule* and *Farce*.
Muſt they *reform* the World! a likely *Task!*
Tis *Vizard* all, and them we'll ſoon *unmask*.
The reſt will *tumble* in, or if they ſtay
And loiter in *Damnation's* ample Way,
I've one *Expedient* left, which can't but take,
My laſt *Reſerve*; From yon black *brimſtone* Lake,
Whence two *Canals* thro *ſubterranean Veins*
Are drawn to *Sodom* and *Campania's* Plains,
My ſelf I'll fill a *Vial*, and infuſe
My very Soul amid the *potent Juice*:

This *Eſſence* near my *Heart* I'll with me bear,
And this among my *deareſt Fav'rites* ſhare,
Already *tutor'd* by the *Theatre*;
Who paſs'd thoſe *Bugbears Conſcience*, *Law* and *Shame*
Have there been taught that *Virtue's* but a *Name*:
Exalted Souls who *vulgar Sins* deſpiſe;
Fit for ſome *new diſcover'd* nobler *Vice*;
One *Drop* of this their *frozen Blood* ſhall warm,
And *frighted Nature's feebler Guards* diſarm:
Till their *chill Veins* with hotter *Fevers* glow
Than any *Etna* or *Veſuvius* know,
Scarce equal'd by their *Parent Flames* below;
Till wide around the *gen'rous Canker* ſpread,
And *Vengeance* draw on each *devoted Head*:
Impatient *Heav'n* it ſelf our *Arms* ſhall join,
The *Skies* again with *forky Lightnings* ſhine;
Till glutted *Deſolation* pants for Breath,
And *guilty Shades* ſhall croud the *Realms of Death*.
—She ſaid, the *Motion pleas'd*, ſhe *wings* away
And in blue *pois'nous Foggs* invades the *Day*:
Part of her *direful Threats* too true we find,
And *Heav'n* avert the *Plagues* that yet remain *behind*!
The *Path* which *Epic* treads the TRAGIC Muſe *Tragedy.*
With *daring* tho *unequal* Steps purſues;
A *little Epic* ſhines through every *Scene*,
Tho more of *Life* appears, and leſs *Machine*;
More *Action*, leſs *Narration*, more *Delight*;
We *ſee* the *Gods* deſcend, and *Heroes* fight.
While *Oedipus* is *raving* on the *Stage*,
Mild *Pity* enters and diſſolves our *Rage*;
We *low'r* our *haughty Spirits*, our *Pride* and *Hate*,
And learn to *fear* the ſad *Reverſe of Fate*.
A *Tyrant's Fall*, a treach'rous *Stateſman's* End
Clear the *Juſt Gods*, and equal *Heav'n* defend:
Ungrateful *Factions* here themſelves torment,
And *bring* thoſe very *Ills* they would *prevent*:
Nor think the ſoft *Intrigues* of *Love* too mean
To fill the *Stage* and grace the *Tragic Scene*!
Who from the *World* this *Salt of Nature* takes,
Twice Slaves of Kings, of *Life* a *Deſart* makes.
The *Moral* and *Pathetick* neatly join'd,
Are beſt for *Pleaſure* and for *Uſe* deſign'd.

Be this in *Tragic* an *Eternal Law*;
Bold Strokes and *larger* than the *Life* to draw:
Let all be *Great*; when here a *Woman's* ſeen,
Paint her a *Fury*, or a *Heroine*:
Slaves, *Spendthrifts*, angry *Fathers*, better fit
The meaner *Sallies* of COMEDIAN Wit;
But *Courtly* HORACE did their *Stage* refuſe,
Nor was it trod by *Maro's* heav'nly Muſe:
A *Walk* ſo *low* their *nobler Minds* diſdain,
Where *ſordid Mirth's* exchang'd for *ſordid Gain*;
Where, in falſe *Pleaſure* all the *Profit's* drown'd,
Nor *Authors* with juſt *Admiration* crown'd:
Hence was the *Sock* a Task for *ſervile Wit*,
Courſe PLAUTUS hence, and neater TERENCE writ:
Yet if you ſtill your *Fortune* long to take,
And long to hear the *crouded Benches* ſhake;
If you'd *reform* the *Mob*, lov'd *Vice reſtrain*,
The *Pulpits* break, and neighb'ring *Bu[illegible]* drain;
Let *Heav'n* at leaſt, if not its *Prieſts*, be free,
The *Bible* ſures's too *grave* for *Comedy*:
If ſhe nor *lewdly* nor *profanely* talk
She'll have a *cleaner*, tho a *narrower Walk*.
Our Nation's *endleſs Humour* will ſupply
So large a *Fund* as never can be *dry*;
Why then ſhould *Vice* be *bare* and *open* ſhown,
And with ſuch *Nauſeous Scenes* affront the *Town*?
Why thrive the *Lewd*, their *Wiſhes* ſeldom croſt,
And why *Poetic Juſtice* often loſt?
They plead they copy *Nature*.—Don't abuſe
Her *ſacred Name* with ſuch a *vile Excuſe*!
She wiſely *hides* what theſe, like Beaſts *diſplay*,
Ev'n *Vice* it ſelf, leſs *impudent* than they,
Remote in *Shades*, and far from *conſcious* Day.
From this *Retrenchment* by ſtrong *Reaſon* beat,
They next to *poor Neceſſity* retreat:
The *Murderers*, *Bawds* and *Robbers* laſt pretence
With equal *Juſtice*, equal *Innocence*!
So *Crack*, in *pious Fit*, will plead ſhe's *poor*,
'Tis a *hard Choice*, Good Sir, to *ſtarve* or *whore*!
—Is there no *Third*, or will ſuch *Reas'nings* paſs
In *Bridewel's* rigid Court, or ſave the *Laſh*?
Where the *ſtern Judge*, like *Radamanth*, ſurveys
The *trembling Sinner*, and each Action *weighs*.

A lazy, black, encumber'd *Stream* rolls by,
Whose thick *Sulphureous Vapours* load the Sky;
Near where, in *Caves* from *Heav'n's* sweet *Light* debar'd,
Shrieks, *Groans*, and *Iron Whips*, and *Clanks of Chains* are heard.
And can't you *thrash*. or *trail* a *Pike* or *Pole*?
Are there no *Jakes* in Town, or *Kennels* foul?
No *honester Employment*, that you chuse
With such *vile Drudgery* t'abase the heav'n-born *Muse*?
The num'rous Ode in various *Paths* delights, *Ode.*
Love, *Friendship*, *Gods* and *Heroes*, *Games* and *Fights*:
Her *Age* with *Veneration* is confess'd,
The *first great Mother* she of all the rest.
This * Moses us'd, and David's Royal Lyre,
This he whom wond'ring *Seraphs* did *inspire*,
Whence Pindar stole some *Sparks of heav'nly Fire*,
Who now by Cowley's happy Muse improv'd,
Is *understood* by some, by more *belov'd*:
The *Vastness* of his Thought, the daring *Range*,
That imperceptible and pleasing *Change*,
Our jealous *Neighbours* must themselves confess
The *British Genius* tracks with most Success;
But still the *Smoothness* we of *Verse* desire,
The *Regulation* of our *Native Fire*:
This from experienc'd *Masters* we receive,
Sweet Flatman's Works, and Dryden's this will give.
If you in *pointed* Satyr most delight, *Satyr.*
Worry not, where you only ought to *bite*:
Easie your *Style*, unstudy'd all and clear.
Prosaic Lines are *pardonable* here.
There are whose *Breath* would blast the *brightest Fame*,
Who from *base Actions* court an *odious Name*,
With *Beauty* and with *Virtue* War proclaim;
Who *bundle* up the *Scandals* of the *Town*,
And in *lewd Couplets* make it all their *own*:
Just Shame be *theirs* who thus *debauch* a *Muse*,
To vile *Lampoons* a *noble Art* abuse:
As *ill* be *theirs*, and *half of* Dats's *Fate*,
Who always dully rail against the *State*.

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* *I know some have affirm'd that* Moses's *Song in the* 14 *th of* Exodus *was writ in Hexameters, but I can't perceive any such thing in it, any more than in the* 90 *th.* Psalm, *or the Book of* Job, *which seem to be written about the same time with it. The Song of the* Well, *in* Numbers, *pag.* 15. *is clearly an* Ode *of unequal Measures.*

Kings

Kings are but *Men*, nor are their *Councils* more,
Thoſe *Ills* we can't *avert* we muſt *deplore*:
Not *many Poets* were for *Stateſmen* made,
It asks more *Brains* than ſtocks the *Rhiming* Trade:
(At leaſt, when they the *Miniſtry* receive,
To *Poets Militant* their *Muſe* they leave.)
All *ſordid Flat'ry* hate, it pleaſes none
But *Tyrants* grinning on their *Iron Throne*:
Yet where wer'e rul'd with *wiſe* impartial Sway,
The *Muſes* ſhould their *grateful Homage* pay:
'Tis *baſe* alike a *Tyrant's* Name to raiſe,
And grudg a *Parent Prince* our *tributary Praiſe*.
No wonder thoſe who by *Proſcriptions* gain
In *Marian* Days, or *Sylla's* bloody Reign,
Of the divine *Auguſtus* ſhould complain;
Who ſtoops to wear a *Crown's uneaſie Weight*,
As *Atlas* under Heav'n, to prop the *State*:
No *Glory* ſtrikes his Great exalted Mind,
No *Pleaſure* like obliging all Mankind;
He lets the *Factious* their weak *Malice* vent,
Puniſh'd enough while they themſelves *torment*:
Satiate with *Conqueſt*, his dread *Sword* he ſheaths,
And with a *Nod disbands ten thouſand Deaths*.
Who dares *Rebellious Arms* againſt him move
While his *Prætorian Guard's* his Subjects *Love*?
Admir'd by all the *braveſt* and the *beſt*,
Who wear a *Roman Soul within their ample Breaſt*:
Tho *charm'd* with *both*, which ſhall they more *admire*
In *Peace* his *Wiſdom*, or in *War* his *Fire*?
—*One Labour* yet remains, and that they *aſk*,
Alcides never clear'd a *nobler Task*;
O *Father!* baniſh'd *Vertue* O reſtore!
Let *Hydra Vice* pollute thy *Reign* no more!
Strike through the *Monſter-Form*, which threatning ſtands,
Fierce with a *thouſand Throats*, a *thouſand Hands!*
Reſcue once more thy *Trojans ſacred Line*
From *ſlaviſh Chains*, ſo ſhall thy *Temples* ſhine
With *Stars*, and all *Elyſium* ſhall be *thine*.

FINIS.